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New Family Medicine Academy to help train doctors in primary care

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SINGAPORE: The Family Medicine Academy has been launched at Bukit Batok Polyclinic to help train doctors in primary care.

For a start, year one students at the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine will spend a week at the polyclinic, using the academy as a base for training.

A key feature of the school's curriculum is that subjects will no longer be divided into pre-clinical and

clinical years -- a practice which usually meant clinical exposure occurs only at a later stage of the medical course.

Permanent Secretary for Health, Mrs Tan Ching Yee, said with healthcare needs rising and changing as a result of an ageing population, strong primary care is needed to look after patients, particularly those with chronic conditions, for the rest of their lives.

The purpose-built academy has a Clinical Skills Laboratory where students can gain practical skills in primary care procedures.

Adjunct Associate Professor Chong Phui-Nah, the director of family medicine development at National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, said: "Here in the facility, in the Family Medicine Academy, they actually learn communication skills and they learn it in a clinical setting with simulated patients. They also learn practical surgical skills." - CNA/nd